

Savannah Pastor Delivers Opening Prayer for U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. - Congressman John Barrow (GA-12) today welcomed Rev. Matthew Southall Brown, Sr., pastor emeritus of St. John Baptist Church, to the U.S. Capitol to deliver the opening prayer for the U.S. House of Representatives as today's Guest Chaplain.

Born and raised in Savannah, Rev. Matthew Southall Brown, Sr., served his country with valor in World War II. At a time when the armed forces were still segregated, he was one of the 2,221 black soldiers who volunteered for infantry duty during the Battle of the Bulge. After being honorably discharged, Rev. Brown returned to his native Savannah to attend college under the G.I Bill of Rights. He later took over the ministry at Savannah's historic St. John Baptist Church, "the Mighty Fortress." Over the next 35 years, Rev. Brown led his congregation, becoming not only a strong voice in the pulpit, but a major leader in the fight for equality during the Civil Rights Movement in Savannah. Currently, he serves as a member of the Savannah Board of Ethics, having been nominated by Mayor Otis Johnson and the Savannah City Council.

"I'm humbled and honored to be able to welcome Rev. Matthew Southall Brown, Sr., to Washington today," said Barrow. "A devoted father, grandfather, great-grandfather and husband, Rev. Brown has dedicated his life to service, not only to his family, but to his church, his community, and his country. He's spent his life giving back to others, inspiring his congregation, and helping people find strength in times of adversity and hope in times of tragedy."

The guest chaplain program is sponsored by the Office of the Chaplain of the House of Representatives. Guest chaplains must be recommended by current members of Congress, and each member of Congress is allowed to recommend only one religious leader per Congress. Opening the House of Representatives in prayer is a tradition that began in 1789 with the first Continental Congress. For more information about the Office of the Chaplain, visit <http://chaplain.house.gov>.

The full text of Rev. Matthew Southall Brown, Sr.'s prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father, we are confident that you are here in the midst of us. As we gather here this morning, we ask for your wisdom and courage for the members of this august body, as they face the challenges of this day. Lord, lead I pray. Lead them, in matters facing this nation and the indeed the world. We live, my Father, in a time when, "men are trying to war their way to peace, spend their way to wealth, and enjoy their way to heaven." Lord, it is our prayer that each member of this House of Representatives be sensitive to your voice, the needs of the people of America and, indeed, throughout the world. May the decisions made here be for the good of America and the world. Hasten the day, Father, when men will "beat their war tools into pruning hooks and study war no more." Finally, my Father, we pray for our President, Barack Obama, his family, and all leaders of this great nation. May this nation once again hear the words of the Lord Himself say, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land". II Chronicles 7:14

It is in the Name of him who said,
"If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me."

It is in His name we pray. Amen.

[Click here](#)
to view the video of Rev. Matthew Southall Brown's prayer

[Click here](#)
to view Congressman Barrow's tribute to Rev. Brown.

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